

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-6 and 8-17 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 14, 16 and 17 are independent. Claims 1, 2, and 8 have been amended, claim 7 has been canceled, and claims 14-17 are added.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and §103

Claims 1, 2, 5, 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,339,328 to Keene et al. ("Keene"). Claims 1 and 10 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by the article written by Brake et al. ("Brake"). Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Keene in view of U.S. Patent 5,343,707 to Sata. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the subject matter of allowable claim 7, thereby placing claim 1 into condition for allowance, along with the claims dependent therefrom.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, patentably defines over the applied art, along with dependent claims 2, 5, and 10-12.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 2, 5, and 10-12 are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 3, 4, 6-9 and 13 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants have re-written claims 3, 6 and 13 in independent form as new claims 14, 16 and 17. Claim 15 depends from allowable claim 14 and is, accordingly, allowable.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

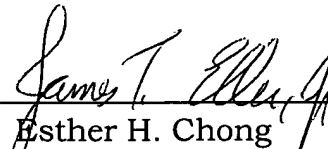
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46,472, at (703) 205-8076, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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